

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:
 - a) forming a resist film ~~out of a resist material~~ on a substrate;
 - b) pre-baking the resist film;
 - c) exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a photomask~~; and
 - d) developing the exposed resist film, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate,
wherein the steps b) and c) are carried out in a vacuum ~~without subjecting the resist film to the air~~.
2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.
3. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:
 - a) forming a resist film ~~out of a resist material~~ on a substrate in a first processing chamber ~~filled with the~~ containing air or an inert gas;
 - b) pre-baking the resist film in a vacuum in a second processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~;
 - c) transporting the pre-baked resist film in line to a vacuum in a third processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~ and then exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a photomask~~ in the third processing chamber; and

d) transporting the exposed resist film in line to the first processing chamber and then developing the exposed resist film in the first processing chamber, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 3, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

5. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:

a) forming a resist film out of a chemically amplified resist material on a substrate;

b) pre-baking the resist film;

c) exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a photomask~~;

d) post-baking the exposed resist film; and

e) developing the post-baked resist film, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate,

wherein the steps b), c) and d) are carried out in a vacuum ~~without subjecting the resist film to the air~~.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

7. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:
 - a) forming a resist film out of a chemically amplified resist material on a substrate in a first processing chamber ~~filled with the~~ containing air or an inert gas;
 - b) pre-baking the resist film in a vacuum in a second processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~;
 - c) transporting the pre-baked resist film in line to a vacuum in a third processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~ and then exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a photomask~~ in the third processing chamber;
 - d) transporting the exposed resist film in line to the second processing chamber and then post-baking the exposed resist film in the second processing chamber; and
 - e) transporting the post-baked resist film in line to the first processing chamber and then developing the post-baked resist film in the first processing chamber, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

9. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:
 - a) forming a resist film out of a chemically amplified resist material on a substrate;
 - b) pre-baking the resist film;
 - c) exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a~~

~~photomask~~;

d) post-baking the exposed resist film;
e) forming a silylated layer selectively on the surface of the post-baked resist film;
and
f) dry-developing the resist film, on which the silylated layer has been formed,
using the silylated layer as a hard mask, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate,
wherein the steps b), c), d), e) and f) are carried out in a vacuum ~~without~~
~~subjecting the resist film to the air~~.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

11. (Currently amended) A pattern forming method comprising the steps of:
a) forming a resist film ~~out of a photoresist material~~ on a substrate in a first processing chamber ~~filled with the~~ containing air or an inert gas;
b) pre-baking the resist film in a vacuum in a second processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~;
c) transporting the pre-baked resist film in line to a vacuum in a third processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~ and then exposing the pre-baked resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation ~~through a photomask~~ in the third processing chamber;
d) transporting the exposed resist film in line to the second processing chamber and then post-baking the exposed resist film in the second processing chamber;

e) transporting the post-baked resist film in line to a vacuum in a fourth processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~ and then forming a silylated layer selectively on the surface of the post-baked resist film in the fourth processing chamber; and

f) transporting the resist film, on which the silylated layer has been formed, in line to a vacuum in a fifth processing chamber ~~filled with a vacuum~~ and then dry-developing the resist film, having the silylated layer thereon, using the silylated layer as a hard mask in the fifth processing chamber, thereby defining a resist pattern on the substrate.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the step b) comprises heating the resist film while irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

13. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

a first processing chamber for forming a resist film out of a resist material on a substrate and for defining a resist pattern on the substrate by developing the resist film that has been exposed to extreme ultraviolet radiation;

a second processing chamber, filled with a vacuum, for pre-baking the resist film; and
a third processing chamber, also filled with a vacuum, for exposing the pre-baked resist film to the extreme ultraviolet radiation through a photomask.

14. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

15. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for exhausting a gas, emanated from the resist film, out of the second processing chamber.

16. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

- a first processing chamber for forming a resist film out of a chemically amplified resist material on a substrate and for defining a resist pattern on the substrate by developing the resist film that has been exposed to extreme ultraviolet radiation;
- a second processing chamber, filled with a vacuum, for pre- and post-baking the resist film before and after the resist film is exposed to the extreme ultraviolet radiation, respectively; and
- a third processing chamber, also filled with a vacuum, for exposing the pre-baked resist film to the extreme ultraviolet radiation through a photomask.

17. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

18. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for exhausting a gas, emanated from the resist film, out of the second processing chamber.

19. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

- a first processing chamber for forming a resist film out of a chemically amplified resist material on a substrate;
- a second processing chamber, filled with a vacuum, for pre- and post-baking the resist film before and after the resist film is exposed to extreme ultraviolet radiation, respectively;
- a third processing chamber, also filled with a vacuum, for exposing the pre-baked resist film to the extreme ultraviolet radiation through a photomask;
- a fourth processing chamber for forming a silylated layer selectively on the surface of the post-baked resist film; and
- a fifth processing chamber for defining a resist pattern on the substrate by dry-developing the resist film, on which the silylated layer has been formed, using the silylated layer as a hard mask.

20. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 19, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for irradiating the resist film with a type of radiation having too long a wavelength to sensitize the resist film.

21. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 19, wherein the second processing chamber comprises means for exhausting a gas, emanated from the resist film, out of the second processing chamber.